Chapter 2

ECONOMIC STATUS OF JEWISH WOMEN

Women are "half the world's economic population but put in two thirds of the working hours, grow half the food, but receive one tenth of the wages and own only one percent of the world's property;" Women's invisibility in national accounts "belittles our role in the economy and society, chips away at our self-esteem, leads policy makers to overlook the impact of decisions on women's lives, and makes it difficult for women to achieve equality in our society," – United Nations Analysis on Women, quoted by Mary Collins, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in Canada at International Conference on the Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Work in Ottawa in 1993 (Fleming and Spellerberg 1999: 101).

In this chapter our concern is to examine the economic status of Israeli Jewish women. Jewish women in Israel are present in all sectors of the Israeli economy but most of them are segregated in the traditional occupations such as teaching, social service, and clerical work. The chapter deals not only with gender segregation in Israeli labour market but also with those variables that compel women to participate in these sectors only. It throws light on the fact that Jewish women do not form a homogenous group and factors like ethnicity, class have historically determined their economic status. The chapter also discusses those laws adopted by the state to enhance gender equality in labour market and how efficient these laws are.

Introduction

In modern world a very powerful indicator of the life chances of individual and families; singly and together which substantially define the position of individuals and families is socio-economic status (SES). In industrialized societies, the primary source of income for most people is wages and salaries. Moreover, in the absence of hereditary distinctions of rank, occupations are the primary basis of both power differentials and prestige distinctions. In the modern world intergenerational status reproduction is mostly determined by the similarity in education level and occupational status of successive generations. According to sociological studies in modern societies education has become the primary vehicle for occupational allocations and mobility (Judith 2001:101-102).
Sociological as well as feminist theory admits that an important cause of women’s secondary status in labour market is that their primary responsibility is to take care of the oldest institution of the state that is family (Ibid). Feminist theory also lays emphasis on patriarchal structure of the state due to which women of developing as well as developed nations in 21st century are getting less financial assistance for their hard work. Women are still segregated in traditional fields of occupation and this is a universal phenomenon. The aspects in this chapter used to measure the status of women are their participation in different sectors of economy, equal wages, their participation at managerial level, etc.

**Israeli Economy**

To find out economic status of Jewish women in Israel it is essential to know briefly about the evolution of the Israeli economy during half a century. The form of economy in Israel is a mixture of government activity and state planning along with free enterprise. Israel’s economic ideology, regardless of the party in power, is toward an activist welfare state, which in turn condones a high degree of concentration of economic might at the centers of power. The relative poverty of the country in resources and tremendous expense of defence and immigration absorption projects have created a highly centralized overstretched economy (Arian 1991: 32). And it is also true that like most of other nations the sexual and ethnic composition of occupations is never considered in relation to their distribution in the different economic sectors and branches. Yet it is true that in Israel ethnicity, lie different groups among Jewish population who have made an impact on resource sharing in the society. Israeli state after its foundation in 1948, started to grow as a healthy economy. Undoubtedly, Israel’s “economic miracle” was made possible through huge economic aid the country received over the years as well as German reparations in the mid-1950s, but the contribution of its economic policies and programmes cannot be underestimated. Israel’s economic achievement can fully be appreciated on the basis of four challenges: (1) fighting four wars and maintaining national security which required Israel to spend 10-25 percent of its budget on defence at different periods of time, (2) absorbing a large number of immigrants, (3) establishing a modern economic infrastructure and (4) providing a high level of public service. In the context of Israeli economic development its effective utilization it was crucial (Jain
There are other three interrelated processes that can characterize this growth of Israeli economy; the state directed capitalization of the expanding economy in the beginning; the growth of the state apparatus; an increasing class differentiation and ethnic division of labour. Two major ethnic groups are commonly distinguished within the Jewish population: Jews of European or American origin (mainly Ashkenazim) and Jews of Asian and/or African origin (mainly Sephardim). These two groups are of roughly of equal size in Israeli population. Despite an "official" ideology that supports equality and ethnic integration, Asian African is, without question, subordinate to European-Americans in every dimension of social stratification: income, occupation, and education (Ibid).

Israel is the nation which was under the British mandate and other distinguishing feature about the state is that it is the nation of immigrant people. Because of above mentioned features the role of state apparatus needed in Israeli economy is to fulfill many functions which previously were filled by the British mandate government. In addition it was the duty of the Israeli state to provide job opportunities for the newly arrived immigrants. After the foundation of state many new positions opened up at the higher levels of the state apparatus. Mainly veteran Ashkenazi men filled these positions with more people required at the bottom, women being one of the important sources of recruitment. Another important feature of Israeli labour market is inter-group differences (in terms of Ashkenazi and Oriental women). This point is highlighted in the chapter wherever data fulfill this demand (Swirski and Marlyin 1991: 78-79).

**Israeli Economy 1948 onwards**

In spite of the democratic system in Israel, compared to most Western democracies as mentioned above, Israel is a highly centralized, state-regulated capitalistic economy, where ownership of economic resources is divided between the government and the Histadrut (labour union federation), and the private (capitalist) sectors. From the early prestate period until the elections of 1977, the Labor party dominated both the government and the Histadrut. The party's control over access to economic opportunity and jobs was an important political resource, with which it used to establish its power.
Gross-patronage declined in importance, but access to elite jobs in the economy continued to be influenced by political considerations (Azmon 1981: 547). The capitalization of Israeli economy had been started after its foundation when Labour government was brought in to hold the political power. This government declared Israel’s orientation towards a ‘mixed economy’ (meaning thereby that state would adopt socialist pattern as well as capitalist pattern). In practice, that meant profit oriented economic activity and a hierarchically structured bureaucracy. This was manifested in various ways, such as a strong emphasis on the need to attract private capital, the transfer of large amounts of national resources to private hands via newly established financial institutions; the adoption of a wage policy leading to increase wage differentials and a shift towards ‘efficiency’ system in labour process (Ibid).

In fact the 1940s and early 1950s were those years when Israeli economy faced crisis due to burden of mass immigration of Jews who accompanied by shortage of basic necessities that necessitated an austerity programme of rationing and price control. On the other hand, some scholars believe that 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s were highly successful in terms of economic growth, with the exception of the 1966-67 recessions. By the early 1960s the economy had successfully absorbed the mass immigration of earlier years and labor shortages had become the norm (Kanovsky 1996: 1). The accelerated development of substituting industry began in 1950 when investment capital became more readily available in Israel. During that period manufacture sector was given high priority by Israeli government. In 1962 export industries were given priority (Gradul, 1993: 9). These steps helped the state apparatus in the expansion of labour intensive, privately owned industries which were then in need of cheap labour. Consequently women fulfilled an important role in such industries mainly in textile, clothing and later in electronics. In 1973 there were major changes in Israeli economy that was facing inflation after the Yom Kippur war. During this period Israeli government attention shifted towards diamond industry and financial institutions (Ibid: 79). Female labour was also an essential component in the growth of the financial institutions promoted by the Israeli state in 1970s. This demand of female workers later aggravated when the jobs were created in the field of insurance, community and other services (Azmon 1981: 549).
In 1980s Israeli economy underwent structural reforms. In other words it moved towards liberalization that reduced government role in the economy. In fact these reforms centered around the "New economic policy of 1985" (also denoted the emergency economic stabilization plan). During this period government adopted several steps to stabilize the Israeli economy and to keep check on inflation. These steps included raising foreign currency reserve, and improvement of balance of payments by means of budget cut, a 20 percent devaluation of Israeli currency, cuts in subsidies of basic products and freezing of wages, prices and exchange rate (Greenberg 1991: 23). In 1984 the Israeli budget deficit was $ 5 billion which declined to zero during the second half of 1985. In 1986-87 there was a budget surplus due to certain steps of the government: it made cut in public expenditure, which was 77.4 percent of total GNP in 1980, was reduced to 54.7 percent of GNP in 1994. Defence cost which in 1978-80 amounted to 27.8 percent of GNP was reduced to 20.6 percent of GNP in 1981-85 and to 10.1 percent of GNP in 1991-1995. Many state service organizations and enterprises such as the postal service, the water company, defence related establishments, the national airline (ELAL), and commercial banks were converted to state owned corporation or authorities, and some were in the process of privatization, with organizational manpower and industrial relations implications (Aharani 1998: 45).

All these steps enhanced the competition in those sectors of Israeli economy that was under government monopoly earlier. During this period there has been a selective dismantling of protective regulations and subsidies at the expense of agriculture and favouring for example, high tech development and manufacturing. Due to privatization many Israeli firms in labour extensive economic branches such as food processing, textile and clothing manufacturing either closed down or moved to low wage labouring countries like Palestine authority, Jordan and Egypt. And large number of multi-national firms undertook expanded operations in Israel. It can also be considered as the impact of globalization over Israel. All these implementations by the Israeli state also made their

1 On the other hand Israeli Foreign Ministry put it in these words once a traditional economy, based mainly on agriculture, light industry and labour intensive production, Israel became a knowledge-based economy, with internationally competitive telecommunications, high-tech, and agro-technology industries. Israel’s macroeconomic environment has undergone remarkable changes during the last 15 years (www.mof.gov.il/hachnasot/eo/).
impact on the Israeli health policy. In 1992 the government did the privatization of health care services. Due to that in 1992, a process was initiated whereby 6 government hospitals were reorganized. These new entities were to be not for profit, but they were to be run more like companies. Earlier management was taken into account not only the quality of services but also the cost (Sultman 1995:175). Privatization also allowed the directors of the hospitals to become more independent. It also permitted government hospitals to hire staff on a temporary basis (Shirmon, 1997:140). Earlier more or less 85 percent of Israeli population was receiving the health care services from the General Sickness Fund. In 1994, National Health Insurance Law that was adopted by Israel adversely affected General Sickness Fund’s financial resources as well as membership that come under Histadrut. In 2000-2001 many banks and (Bezeq) Israel’s telecommunication, Israel’s Chemical LTD were also moved into the private hands (www.gca.gov.il). Due to Privitaziation Israel’s GDP per capita in 2000 was US $17,500- higher than that of Spain, New Zealand, Portugal and Greece. Israel's GDP per capita is higher than in some of the EU States (Ibid). Thus there were some positive consequences of liberalization even if there were certain subsidy cuts made by Israeli government.

As already mentioned Jewish women had been participating in the economic activities before the establishment of Israeli state or in the Yishuv period [the years of Jewish community in Palestine). After the foundation of Israel, the state it has adopted several laws to enhance the participation of women in labour force. During the second aliyah [wave of immigration], even prior to 1st World War, women had organized to protest their exclusion from politically significant economic roles. The first wave feminist movement (1911-1927) had fought for the right to do the same pioneering work as men (Berestein 1987). Jewish women succeeded in asserting their right to employment, a legacy bequeathed to later generations of women in Israel [not only Jewish women). They had not, however, succeeded in gaining representation in the policy-making bodies of the economic institutions that were created in the prestate period. Jewish women remain virtually absent from positions of influence within all the major economic institutions owned either by the Labor party dominated Histadrut or by the government,
which together employ the majority of the labour force. In 1977 when Likud came into power, it brought a revitalization of the patronage system, as the new government sought to reward its party faithful and exert its control over the centre of economic power. The result was even greater limitations on women’s access to prized positions and exclusion of women from economic policy decision making. The 1980s onward Jewish women got chance to serve some influential position yet their number was still very low (Ibid).

**Human Resource Development and Women**

As mentioned above, education is the primary tool of personal development. The educated manpower is a backbone of an economy also. Israel has had dearth of human-resources since the establishment of the state due to which it has always provided a set role to its women citizens to participate in Jewish economy after its foundation. Primary resource of an economy is its human resource without which it cannot survive. The development of an economy is not only based on advance technology but on skilled human resources also. The requirement of skilled human resources is fulfilled by competent education system of that economy. The same is true of Israeli case that spends some 8.5 percent of its GNP on education (www.knesset.gov.il).

Israeli’s accord to the education system a very important role with respect to its contribution to society, equal opportunity and the future of individuals in society. The education system has undergone important changes since the establishment of the State - the extension of compulsory education beyond 14 years of age, structural changes in elementary and secondary schools, the free high school education law, and reforms aimed at improving the level of education and narrowing socio-economic gaps in society (Herzog 2000).

Jewish women of European origin were part of education system of the particular nation (means wherever they were living) before the 2nd World War. After the creation of Jewish state it adopted *Compulsory Educational Law* 1949, and made it obligatory- that all children between 5 and 15 must study. Education is provided free of cost till the age of 17, and for 18 years olds who have not completed their 10th grade yet. Participation in the
primary and secondary education in Israel is nearly universal. The median age for men and women has been more or less identical (12.2 for men, 12.3 for women in 1993). Median age for Arab women was 9.7 years and for men it was 10.7 years in 1997. Even if illiteracy rate is very low among Jewish women in Israel it is comparatively higher than their male counterpart. It was 6.4 percent for all Jewish women in 1995 and 3.3 percent for men. In 2000 it was 5 percent for women and 2 percent for men (CEDAW/C/ISR2/3 2001: 129).

Secondary education in Israel is made up of different educational tracks. In 8th or 9th grades, students are placed on either a general or technological/vocational track. From here they proceed to different high schools accordingly. At this stage students select specific courses of study such as humanities and science, or a specific vocational field such as biotechnology and so on. As it is a universal phenomenon girls study on general track like social sciences and humanities. The same is true about Israeli girls. During 1980s in Israel the ratio of men and women on general track was 43.6 percent for women and 27.7 percent for boys. (Total 100) In 1992-93 school-year 46.6 percent were of law students, 46 percent of medical students, and 18.2 percent of engineering and architecture students. On the other hand within vocational tracks machinery and electronics are almost male “subjects”. Fashion and nursing/paramedical training are female dominated fields. Here once again overall participation of Jewish girls consistently is better. More girls than boys take exams and their success rate is higher than their male counterparts. In 1990s, 86.5 percent of all girls within 12th grade age group studied in school compared with only 73.5 percent of the boys (Ibid: 82).

Jewish women are part of higher education since the establishment of Israeli state. The proportion of university degree recipients who are women is similar to the percentage of men students. Here once again their number is greater in humanities and social sciences due to their earlier decision for example, in higher education out of 100, 74 percent join humanities, 47 percent science and mathematics, 41 percent agriculture and 18 percent architecture during 1980s. The trend was same during 1990s also; women were highly represented in universities programmes in education 84 percent, in humanities 71.4 percent and social sciences 59 percent, the under-representation in the technological field
continued. It was 20 percent. One distinguishing feature about women’s education in Israel is that women university students tend to receive their bachelor degrees earlier than men (median age 26 compared to 27.6 of men) this difference in age is because women are less time bound in Israeli Defense Force (2 years). During 1990s at doctoral level 43.8 percent students are women and the median age for receiving degree is a year lower for men than women. An important fact about their higher education is that it is greater than of other developed countries (Ibid: 90).

Table 2.1

Women’s Participation Rate in Higher Education in Developed Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Country</th>
<th>Under-graduate</th>
<th>Post-graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel</strong></td>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>51%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Religious Education in Israel

When discussing the Israeli educational system, it consists of two trends: “State education” and “State religious education”. State education has been discussed above. In Israeli case, we cannot ignore the religious education. Education is not only the tool of personal development but it is also used by state as a means to promote the values of a society among its students. When dealing with the significance of education in a person’s life the differentiation between the various streams within the State educational system should be noted. Specifically, it should be understood that the State-Religious education (SRE) stream is free to establish values and norms that guide its operation. According to one estimate, 21 percent of Jewish students belong to the SRE stream, or approximately 235,000 children, 50 percent of whom are girls. Most SRE schools are segregated, with
separate classes. The Administrator of the SRE estimates that, at the elementary level, 35 percent of the classes are separate, and at the high-school level, 90 percent of the classes are separate. The Israeli Administrator claims that the budget allocated to girls’ schools is the same as the budget allocated to boys’ schools (www.justice.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/93BCC9E). Those who move towards religious education do not get great opportunity in labour market. This is especially true about women.

Even if Israeli state has been providing education to its women citizens since its establishment, the curriculum of school books was not gender neutral. In 1993, in an attempt to combat sexist stereotypes, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport issued a new list of criteria for school books. Among these criteria are: (1) since Hebrew is a gender-specific language, grammar forms should be used in order to avoid being exclusive; (2) effort should be made to combat occupational stereotypes in textbooks and to prevent new stereotypes from being created; (3) it is important to stress that the choice of professions is open to everyone based on their individual strengths, abilities and talents, without discrimination on the basis of gender; (4) books must include equal use of descriptive character traits, so that a specific characteristic is not used exclusively for either men or women; (5) the activities and achievements of women should be described alongside those of men; and (6) equality must be conveyed through the writing style; for example by not always referring to teachers in the feminine form. Some critics of the education system point out that although the Israeli Ministry of Education has created a list of “rules” for improving the situation, the effectiveness of these can be checked only when it would be implemented. These critics believe it is essential that: (1) the Ministry of Education carefully examines all the books they publish and concern itself with the content of privately published school books; (2) it is necessary to educate teachers about the existing sexist messages in school books, and to equip them with tools to deal with social messages that contrast with the goals of education and of an enlightened society; and (3) women’s involvement in the Ministry of Education, especially at the higher levels may help the next generation create a society in which there is more equality between the sexes (Ibid). All the above mentioned features are the part to enhance women status in
any society. In fact some critics of Israeli Education Ministry believe that all these rules would remain on the paper only.

Medical Facilities for Women

The second significant aspect of human resource development is health of these resources. Women have a right to enjoyment of highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. Good health is essential to leading a productive life, and the right to all women to control all aspects of their health particularly fertility is basic to their empowerment. It is also a salient feature of development of an economy. Israel is also a welfare democratic state, which provides welfare service to its citizens. It spends some 8 percent on health services (See, CEDAW/C/ISR/2/3 2001: 123).

Fertility rate is a significant measure to find out women status in a society because child bearing and rearing are the primary responsibility of a woman. On the other hand the child mortality rate is also helpful to find out whether the government is conscious about health of women citizen or not. These measures are having great importance to know about women’s status especially in the third world countries. These are important variables also according to development as well as liberal feminist theory.

When dealing with the fertility rate in Israel, we find it has been decreasing steadily over the last 20 years. Jewish women from 3.3 children family in 1975 to 2.5 in 1996. Fertility rates are higher for Asian and African origin Jews (3.2) and Ashkenazi and Russian are having lower fertility rates (2.2 and 1.7) respectively. These are higher than those in European and North American Countries. When dealing with the mother’s mortality rate in Israel that is lower than that in the USA. In 1994, it was 5.2 percent in Israel per 100,000 live birth while it was 7.2 in USA. (Swirski et al, 1998).

Another measure that is the female life expectancy at birth is also significantly higher in recent years higher than that for men as can be seen in the table 2.2.
Table 2.2

Israel: Men and Women Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Even if women’s life expectancy is greater than that of men at world-wide level, it is accompanied by various chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart strokes, breast cancer, osteoporosis and eating disorders. Infertility is another common disease in Israeli women.

It is important to find out whether the health policies of a particular government perpetuate gender stereotypes that fail to consider socio-economic disparities and other differences among women. Due to non-availability of data it is difficult to find out what the policy-makers attitude towards women’s health problem in Israel is. During the 1990s, Israeli government had spent lot of money on research and development on women’s diseases, but the health care policy led to disproportionate allocations of resources to highly technological service at the expense of health maintenance throughout the reproductive cycle because child bearing has cultural importance in Israel. Breast cancer is a leading killer of women under the age of 55; three thousand new cases of cancer are diagnosed each year and 800 women die annually from this disease. Actually one out of every nine women has breast cancer in their lifetime. This shows even if Israeli government is spending money on women’s health issues it is still ignoring those fields that require more attention. So it can be said even if Israeli government has made arrangement of education and medical services that are basic needs of women empowerment. It has not saved itself from cultural impact while policy making (Avgar 1997). It has been said because the language of study material is not gender neutral and large number of women are still picking traditional streams in education such as humanities and social science. In medical facilities more attention is given to fertility
related services that is having cultural importance rather than breast cancer and other diseases.

Women’s Labour Force Participation

As in other Western nations, changing social attitudes, an increasing need of two incomes to maintain family living standards and a rise in demand for women’s labour in service industries have contributed to a steady rise in women paid employment.

Women’s participation rate in the civilian labour force among the overall population of women age 15+ has increased continuously since the mid-1950. This trend can be attributed to women’s increased education, the declining number of children per family and changes in norms pertaining to workingwomen. Almost half the women in Israel in 2000 worked outside the home, however their share remains lower than that of employed men. Compared to women’s increased participation in the labour force, men’s participation is continuously declining due to their late entry into and early exit from the workforce. The reasons for this decline include men’s expanded participation in higher education, men’s military service, and government support and allowances that make up a large portion of the family’s income. In a comparison of civilian labor force participation rates among individuals of primary work age (age 25-54) between Israel and several other countries in 1999, Israel ranked 21st for women (68 percent participation) and 30th for men (84 percent) - both considerably low rates.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxemburg</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>66.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


**Impact of World Trade Organization on Jewish Women Life**

Even if Jewish women's participation enhanced in the labour market in last four decades but it is also true that Israeli economy structural reform programme made impact on their economic status. Israel has not yet formally joined the group of countries agreeing to subject their public services to international competition; it has already paved the way for foreign corporations by adopting structural reform programme of World Bank in 1980s. According to a 1999 WTO document, "Trade Policy Review Body: Israel", Israel is developing in the "right" direction: "Barriers to foreign firms in the services sector are generally being removed..."

The "right direction" refers to a trend of increasing commercialization of education, health and social welfare services in Israel. Thus, the concern is based on a meeting between two converging interests: multi-nationals are making headway in the service sector in general and into the public services in particular, at the same time that the public
services in Israel are undergoing accelerated privatization. Due to privatization there was
a boom in Israeli service sector and it moved towards high-tech service industry like
telecom and information technology. Women are mostly segregated in low-tech service
sector. The point is that World Bank makes demand of cancellation of government
subsidies to low-tech industries, and lowered public spending. Due to structural
adjustment programme Israeli government also cut down subsidies that it provided for
employees pension funds. Government lowered public spending becomes the cause of
less spending in welfare policies. The above mentioned two factors make worse impact
on the economic status because most of women are employed in public sector (National
Reports on the Status of Women in Israel 2001). Due to privatization of Israeli economy
there is subsidy cut in the health sector also that makes adverse effect on all the
population including women.

Ethnicity Factor

Besides the HRD and liberalization, other factors that shaped economic status of women
in Israel are class and ethnicity. Here, we deal with the ethnic differences within a
“group” (Women are assumed as a group) in Education at lower level. Of the female
professional workers both academic and non-academic who composed between 45
percent and 50 percent of the labour force in education, only relatively few were
Oriental. In 1968, 48 percent of these women were Ashkenazi women born in Europe and
America and another 30 percent with the Ashkenazi born father. Only 12.4 percent were
Oriental, 8.8 percent born in Asia and Africa and 3.6 percent born in Israel. In 1972
females composed 12.2 percent of the labour force in education of these 43.3 percent
were first generation Ashkenazim and 40.1 percent were second generation Ashkenazim,
while 6.5 percent first generation Orientals and 2.5 percent were second generation
Orientals. This proportion changes slightly only by 1977- first generation Oriental
women, who were 22 percent of labour force, were only 5.5 percent of the female
academic workers. Likewise second generation Oriental women were 4 percent among
female academic workers 15 percent of the whole female labour force. Even if
participation rate of Eastern Jewish women is enhancing day by day in the labour market
these women still face multiple jeopardy. They face difficulties not only because of their eastern origin but because of their lower class.

The presence of Oriental women in a large number is related to the lower level of education system-intermediate, elementary and kindergarten. Oriental women’s presence was 19 percent and 26 percent in 1972 and 1977, respectively. However, their proportion was comparatively lower than Ashkenazi women counterparts. The presence of women with Ashkenazi parents were 7.5 percent of the entire labour force in 1977, they composed 13 percent of elementary and kindergarten teachers. On the other hand, Israeli women of Oriental parents who were 5.8 percent of the labour force were underrepresented in this highly female position and composed only 4.5 percent of its workers.

Oriental women were over-represented during this period in an often forgotten part of education services-the service workers. The growth of the education services meant an increased number in cleanliness, preparing school meals etc. This is where a large number of Oriental women were employed. In 1961 first generation Oriental women composed 40 percent of all female service workers and 63 percent of all female cleaning workers. By 1977 first generation Oriental women composed 59.4 percent of all female service workers and second-generation Oriental women composed another 16.6 percent

When talking about the Israeli Ethiopian Jews - 4 percent of men and 15 percent of women - are to be found in the academic, liberal, and technical professions. Academic occupations include, but are not limited to, university lecturers and researchers, practitioners of the liberal professions, persons with academic occupations in the humanities, and teachers at the post-secondary and post-primary levels. Liberal and technical professions include practical engineers, laboratory staff and operators of technical instrumentation, teachers at the primary and preschool levels, etc (www:advao.org/equ-mon-eth-eng.pdf). In 2000 Dafna Izraeli pointed out that in Israel the ethnic differences in labour force participation among Jewish women still continued. According to her study in 2000, among Jewish women 63 percent of those born in Israel compared to 37.3 percent of those born in West Asian countries and 46.4 percent of those originating from Europe and North and South America, were in labour force.
When we deal with the gender differentiation at senior rank of the services Ashkenazi women who were the second layer of the education service had marginal representation in the senior rank of the service. The senior ranks were in the hand of Ashkenazi men who have great power over the lower rank and file of female teachers who carried out what is planned for them. This trend is still going on (Ibid).

As mentioned above ethnic differences are the basis of class differences in Israeli society. Ashkenazi and Oriental women participation in education helps to find out the differences. When compared the available data about Oriental and Ashkenazi women’s education status in 1982, the Oriental immigrant women had the lowest level of education: just over one quarter (out of 100) had no formal schooling at all, a situation almost nonexistent in other groups. Somewhat over half (58.4 percent) had no more than eight years of schooling that restricted them to unskilled or possibly semiskilled jobs. On the other hand this proportion for European or American women was 32.9 percent. Only 8.8 percent Oriental women received secondary schooling, and only 5.6 percent matriculation certificate. Among European and American immigrant women 26.9 percent attained this level of education and 18 percent obtained certificates at the postsecondary and academic levels (Bernstein1983: 282-85).

The picture had a little bit changed for the second-generation Oriental women than the immigrant generation, but at the same time, the disparity between the Oriental and Ashkenazi was more than reproduced. Oriental women born in Israel had almost all attained at least elementary education. The largest concentration was at the level of full or almost full secondary education. However, few went beyond that. Indeed 11.2 percent had some post secondary education (13-15 years), and 5.7 percent possessed a certificate at post secondary level, but the comparable levels among their peers, the second generation of Ashkenazi women, was much higher 30 percent had some post secondary education, with 17 percent obtaining certificates at this level. When talking about higher education the disparity is more striking. At post secondary level only 3 percent among Oriental second generation are participating as compared to 18.2 percent among the women. Academic certificate, an important prerequisite for more prestigious positions in the labour market, provides a final indicator, with 15.6 percent of Ashkenazi second
generation women having obtained academic certificates, as compared to only 2.1 percent of their Oriental peers (Ibid). How this difference of educational level has made impact on their occupational status is discussed below.

Class as well as Ethnic Inequalities in Labour Force: Subordinate group of a society mostly face inequality for the income. Rosenfeld demonstrated clearly that different groups (defined by race and sex) develop different career dynamics. Her study throws light that race-sex groups tend to utilize different labour market and economic sectors and face different opportunity structures. In Israeli case both women and Asian African Jews are disadvantaged. The income disadvantage of all women however is greater than that of Asian-African. The causes of income differences in between these two groups are not same. The 70 percent of income-difference of two ethnic groups Asian-African and American-European is related to the variables like socio-economic background, education and occupation. In the case of women these variables do not work out, because average working women in Israel are recruited from high social origin and better education. Nevertheless women's average income amounts only to 73 percent of the men's income. This is the example of gender difference in Israeli labour market (Izraeli 1991: 167).

Another significant feature about women’s income is influenced by an ethnic duality within the female in labour market. Oriental women in labour market tend to concentrate in the service occupation, while the Ashkenazi women tend to dominate the clerical and professional occupation. These Ashkenazi women due to their roots related to developed societies since the beginning have got the greater share in the educational resources. This helps them to have greater share from their Mizrahi women counterparts who are having relative less education. This fact is related to the “distinction within a group”. In Israel women of subordinate origin (Mizrahi) are at the bottom of the earning ladder. Income of these women amounts to only 68 percent of the average income of the men (Ibid). Ethiopian Jewish women participation in labour market is not only low but most of them are employed in unskilled occupations (See, www.adva.org/equ-mon-eth-eng.pdf).
In the words of Roter and Shamai (1971) since the mid-1950 the differentials in wages, incomes and standard of living have increased. Not only this, the class division within the Jewish population coincided, to a large extent, due to ethnic distinction between Jews from Europe America—the Ashkenazim and Jews from Asia-Africa—the Orientals. This is not only because of the differences in education but also due to the Ashkenazi elite who in fact controls the Israeli resources.\(^2\)

The ethnic inequality still continues as mentioned in the report on “Status of Women in Israel”, 1998 submitted to Economic and Social Council. According to it,

> “Several distinct groups of women Mizrahi, Arab (Moslem, Druze, Christian and Bedouin) and recent immigrant women (especially Russian and Ethiopian) are vulnerable. It also talked about Mizrahi women who are over-represented in development towns, where labour intensive low and semi-skilled factory work (such as food production and textiles) are the only jobs available. Wages are very low and unemployment is a constant threat (CEDAW/C/ISR11-2 1997: 212).\(^3\)"

### Table 2.4

**Gap of Median Years of Education in between Ashkenazi and Oriental Women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Mizrahi Women</th>
<th>Ashkenazi Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3.7 years</td>
<td>8.8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>5.6 years</td>
<td>9.2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This differentiation within group which makes distinction in SES of Oriental and Ashkenazi women still continues because of class division which distinguishes that the

\(^2\) It is noted in these studies that an ‘ethnic gap’ in political power, income distribution, occupational status, and educational attainment between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim has persisted and, in some respects, even widened, to this day (Kraus and Hodge 1990, pp. 66,68; Schmelz et al. 1991, pp. 109–12; Smooha 1993; Haberfeld and Cohen 1995; Lewin-Epstein et al., forthcoming).

3. Sholom Swirski also made a point in her study in 1977 that the difference between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi was always propagated by the state policies. The same view is propagated by the Barbara Swirski who is a feminist author while the former is a sociologist. The one major difference among two authors is that the Latter one believes more strongly that Mizrahi women are facing discrimination because they are not recognized as a separate group like Ethiopian Jewish women.
generation of immigrants has been carried over into the second generations. This has been in the case with educational differentials as mentioned above that education plays an important role in the distribution of economic resources of a society.

The marked gap within the "group" which existed in the 1950s at elementary education level has been removed to the higher levels of the education system-- a high representation of Orientals in the low status, vocationally oriented sectors of the secondary education, and a low representation in the academic sectors of the secondary and higher education. This has an obvious impact in a labour market that increasingly demands better education as a condition for medium, let alone high-level education. After the establishment of Israeli state that adopted the democratic set-up adopted a policy that was based on gender-differentiation. After the foundation of state mass immigration that began in Israel could not provide time to the newly established state to absorb all of them into labour force within a short period of time. It happened especially with productive labour. Men got preference in the jobs due to the different official approach towards men and women in the reserve labour force. Primarily, the view that men were the 'natural' workers, or rather, the 'natural' providers and supporters of the family affected this difference. In fact during the adjustment of these immigrants the 'patriarchy' of a state had been seen in the official ideology that considered all men as an active part of the civilian labour force. Unlike women, they were perceived as unemployed rather than as an irrelevant potential of labour, to be ignored until needed. That is the cause that during the 1950s, despite the rapid growth, there was a drop in the share of women in the labour force as compared to the 1940s, from approximately 30-32 percent of the labour force to 25 percent. This proportion remained more or less the same until the early 1960s (Bersetein 1991). The impact of class, ethnicity as well as gender in labour market would be discussed wherever, the data is accessible.

**Jewish Women in Israeli Economy**

In official publications such as the monthly journal of the Ministry of Labour and of the Women's Labour Council there is no reference during the 1950s to the need to encourage women to enter wage labour. The cause behind women's negligible presence in labour
market probably was the mass immigration of Jews from countries of West Asia and North Africa. From 1948-55, over 400,000 new immigrants came to Israel. It was totally impossible for a newly created country to absorb such a large number of immigrants in labour force. Israeli government policy at that time was directed at creating jobs primarily for men. During that period new industries such as textiles and food processing were introduced in the new development towns that opened some employment opportunities for women (See, Arian).

Some immigrant women moved towards labour force. Most of these women who were involved in the labour market during the 1950s-1960s were strongly co-related with ethnic origin. These women were mainly related to Ashkenazi community that was English-speaking and less burdened with children. On the other hand, in the 1960s- in the period of economic prosperity there was a recurring appeal to women to join the labour force, and worry was also expressed over their low participation. Two committees were appointed that suggested ways to encourage women to 'go out to work' and emphasis was put for the first time on the importance of women's work both for economy and for themselves. The law of equal pay for women and men was passed during this period - 1964 –and most indicative, changes were introduced in the law, which had prohibited night work for women, passed in 1954, so that in effect almost no restrictions were left. This was first time when there was shortage of labour, and women became an important potential force. The participation rate of women in Israeli economy has been ever increasing as indicated by data in table 2.5.

Table 2.5
Israel: Jewish Women's Labour Force Participation rate during the period 1969 to 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women’s labour force participation rate in Israeli economy had increased during late 1980s when the participation rate was 42 percent (Izraeli 1983). After that Jewish women’s participation was not enhanced even 1 percent annually. In 1995 Jewish women’s participation in labour market was 43.2 percent. And the number of Jewish women who were working in civil labour force in 1995 was 500,000 (iwraw.ige.org/publications/countries/israel.htm). The figure was 46 percent in 2000. In fact this boost of participation of Jewish women in Israeli economy is not an exception because after the 2nd World War women participation had enhanced in world wide level (Hartman 1996: 135). Most of this increase has been caused by the increased participation of married women (to 53.7 per cent in 1990s) and in particular of married mothers with young children (Ibid). The proportion of dual earner families has nearly doubled in the last three decades in Israel (from 26 percent in 1966 to 47 percent in 1989) (Izraeli, 1992:42). Some 65 percent of mothers of children had been participating in the labour market (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1992: 12.7). This trend shows that most of these women have entered in the labour market because they need sufficient income to support their family. To get the whole picture it is essential to move on to examine Jewish women participation in different sectors of economy (See, Izraeli 1983: 77).

Jewish Women’ in Different Sectors of Economy

As mentioned earlier Jewish women have been participating in the Israeli labour force since the establishment of Israel. Here it is mentioned their participation in different sectors of economy.

Table 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing/Skilled Workers (industry, building, transport)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration/ administration and managers</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Scientific and academic workers</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health welfare and social services</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and Water</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction building and civil engineering</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport storage &amp; communication</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking insurance and finance</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table 2.6 is about women’s participation rate in different sectors for those years for which data is available. However, the data beyond this decade is not available fully. Wherever the data is available it has been mentioned as below.

This table shows that Israel is a developed economy because participation of employed men and women in agriculture sector is declining day by day. In 1972, it was 8.5 for men and 7.5 for women in 1975, the ratio for men was 7.8 and for women it was 3.8. In 1995 it was only 1.2 for Jewish women and 4.2 for men. In 2000 the participation of employed Jewish men and women further decreased in this sector, it was only 0.9 for women and 3.3 for men. The participation of Jewish women is also less than their male counterpart in manufacturing sector. In 1975 the ratio of male and female technician was 20.6 and 8.5. The ratio of professional skilled workers was 10.4 for women and 37.4 for men in Israeli industry. It was 13.6 for women and 26 percent for men in 1995. In 2000 it was 11 percent for women and 23.9 percent for men. Jewish women participation rate remained unchanged in Electricity and Water sector. It was 1.3 percent for men in 1995 and 2000 for men and 0.3 percent for women. Jewish women participation is much less in the sector of construction and civil engineering. This field is totally dominated by their male counterparts. 1.8 percent women were employed in this field in 1995 and in 2000 this percentage further declined and it was 0.9 percent only. Their participation in the sector of transport storage and communication was 3.3 percent in 1995 and 4.2 percent in 2000. For their male counterpart it was 7.8 in 1995 and 8.6 in 2000.
The earliest Zionist settlers in Palestine viewed agriculture as a key ingredient of successful colonization, for meeting food needs and for fostering an ideological bond between Jews and the land. Since independence the government has promoted agriculture to attain self-sufficiency and to provide new immigrants with food and employment. Between 1948 and the late 1990s, the land area under cultivation has almost tripled, because of modern irrigation, mechanization, and other technologies. About 750 kibbutzim and moshavim, which are 6 percent of the total population, produce a large portion of Israel's crops. In recent decades the relative importance of agriculture has declined—in terms of GDP, percentage of the population it employs, and in terms of percentage of total export revenue. However, agriculture still remains essential to Israel's economy. In 1996, in terms of agriculture, including forestry and fishing, accounted for about 2 percent of the GDP and employed about 3 percent of the workforce. (www.encarta.msn.com/text_76157008). In fact during 1993-1999 the number employed in agriculture declined absolutely by about 15,500 including about 10,500 farm workers and about 5,000 self employed farmers or kibbutz members, a loss of almost one-fourth of these employed in agriculture in 1993 by close of 1999. It was also pointed out by Levitan Uri that women in kibbutz who worked in agriculture were not particularly satisfied, felt that they were not making the best use of their skills and abilities, and did not hold the position of responsibility.

When talking about Jewish women participation in agriculture they were always part of this sector but their number was less than their male counterparts. As the table 2.6 also shows that Jewish women participation in agriculture is lower than their male counterparts throughout the years. Even if during the Yishuv period Jewish women pioneers worked side by side with their male comrades in the fields of vineyards of the collective and cooperative villages that were the mainstay of socialist and Zionist ideology. The Jewish women made great efforts to perform the same kind of work-road building, swamp draining, ploughing and harvesting under the same conditions.

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4 Kibbutz and Moshav are community living place in Israel. Ideologically kibbutz are based on left ideology while, moshav are associated with right wing.
However, the accounts of Jewish women cooking in the communal kitchen and nursing the malaria-stricken male pioneers in the hospital cannot be discounted. The above mentioned details make clear that gender differentiation in work role was prevalent in Israel after its establishment and it still exists. As it is marked by Naomi Nevo

This differentiation is still continuing in moshavim as marked by Naomi Nevo in *Gender differentiation of Work Roles*. She puts that flower cultivation that is having a significant place in Israeli agriculture. The cultivation is done by the computerized technology. Jewish women in some moshavim do use the computerized technology for the cultivation of flowers themselves. All picking and grading is also done by these women. But they are not free from their role as home-maker. In fact advanced technology gives them time to fulfil their role as mothers and wives. These farms are situated always nearby their homes (Naomi Nevo 1993).

(2) Manufacturing/ Industry

Despite limited natural resources, Israel’s manufacturing sector is the most diversified and most technologically advanced of any country in the West Asia. Until the 1970s manufacturing was concentrated in traditional branches such as, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and metal products. Since then Israel has moved into high-technology fields such as medical, electronics, telecommunications, computer hardware and software, and diamond polishing. The Tel Aviv-Yafo metropolitan area and Haifa serve as the primary manufacturing centers (See, www.encarta.msn.com/text).

A. Jewish Women’s Presence in the Textile and Clothing Industry: In 1953, when industrialization started in the Israel the textile and clothing industry held central position in the process. Both industries are traditionally female oriented industries. In the pre-state Israel both have a high percentage of female workers—50.3 percent women in textile and 65 percent in clothing. With the establishment of the state (1948) there was a marked drop in the proportion of female workers. The drop was in both branches and the cause behind this drop was unemployment among newly migrated Oriental males. Later in 1960s the proportion of women did increase to around 40 percent but later in 1961 this proportion once again down to 31 percent and it further had been reduced to 22.3 percent in 1972 and 1977. The wages in the textile industry have always been very low. The National Consultant of Israel also referred to a unique feature of Israeli textile industry
that it is the combination of advanced know-how with relatively cheap labour. The ethnic composition of the female production workers in the clothing industry by the 1970s there were only few second-generation Ashkenazi women in this profession. In 1972 they composed 2.2 percent labour force. Female production workers who were second generation Israelis composed another 4.8 percent. By 1977 their share dropped to 1.5 percent and 1.3 percent respectively. At the same time the share of second generation Oriental female workers actually increased from 9.6 percent of the labour force in 1972 to 11.8 percent in 1977, exactly twice as much as their share in the entire labour force. (Bersetien, 1993). The Israeli state played an important role to enhance the women participation in this sector of economy because of the availability of cheap labour. The statement mentioned below would make this point clear

"The bottleneck in the clothing industries now-a-days is the shortage of labour power at different levels. A number of actions have been taken to solve this problem, among them: the transfer of investment to areas where there is unutilized manpower, especially in development areas in the north and south. Special effort of industrialization has been directed to Arab villages where an unutilized potential of women has been discovered, women especially suited for the clothing industry" (Industrial Year Book 1974: 78).

The position of women becomes more marginal because many of female clothing workers worked for sub-contractors, in the northern and southern part of the country who lower their wages which further disregards their social benefits. Jewish women presence in manufacturing sector altogether was 13.60 percent for women and 26 percent for men. In 2000 it was 11 percent for women and 23.9 percent for men (as mentioned in table, 2.5).

B. Diamond Industry: Israeli diamond industry emerged after the creation of Israeli state. In the 1960 the Israeli Diamond industry played an important role in Israeli economy. The industry faced a crisis during the Six Day War during 1967. Two weeks before fighting broke out, about 50 percent of the workers had already been mobilized. When the war began, more were recruited. The younger factory owners were also mobilized, and some factories closed. The factories that remained open could not manufacture on a regular basis, because of problems in the production chain. In fact
Israeli Diamond Industry was facing recession before the beginning of Six Day War. However, this was a fledgling industry; in 1967 it only employed about 200-300 people and it is difficult to find out the number of male and female worker in this industry at that time.

After the end of Six Days War there was a boom again in the Israeli Diamond Industry. Those workers and factory owner who left the industry due to recession and war once again moved in the industry. Israeli diamond industry did not suffer from the lack of resources even if the country faced recession during that period. The Israeli diamond industry enjoyed 6.25 percent profit, as was customary for export industries. Because the government was the main partner in the export financing fund, the banks problems with liquidity did not affect the industry as they did other aspects of the country economy.

Israel did not have diamond mines. It imported second hand rough diamond from Belgium, Holland and elsewhere. During 1970s Israeli diamond industry faced a crisis. The crisis was due to Central Selling Organisation CSO's higher price for raw diamond. In 1976-77 some scholars in Israel believed that it was good decade for diamond industries while other found that the industry faced crisis during this time. In 1981 the diamond industry faced a boom and Israeli people who were in this industry made a great profit. But after that very soon Israeli diamond industry faced a crisis and it took four years, until 1985, to get rid of the old stocks, to rebuild the diamond industry and to reach the same level of export as before the crisis. In the course of the 1980s, diamond exports from Israel tripled in value (from about 900 million dollars in 1982 to 2.7 billion dollars in 1989). The volume of crates exported almost doubled, from about 2 million carats in 1982 to about 3.9 million crates in 1989. In the last few years of the decade there was a notable addition of the younger generation to the Israel Diamond Exchange. More than 350 young members joined the exchange, adding new energy to the development of the Israel diamond industry. The numbers of women who are employed in this sector are very small. Only 42 women were self employed in this sector and some 259 female workers working under them. Some 904 men are self employed in this occupation and they were having 6,902 workers in 1995 (See, Karus 2003 ).
C. Defence Production Industry: By the end of the 1970s, the Israeli military industry was supplying 40 percent of Israel's military needs but production runs for the domestic market resulted in high costs per item. The longer production runs necessary to lower unit costs created an imperative to export. In fact it was 1967 when the Israel started to import substituting capacity in military products. It evolved as a major Israeli goal after 1967 because of France arms embargo in the West Asia. In fact that was the period when Israeli Aircraft Industry and Israeli Military Industries which grew immensely after 1967, until in 1979 they employed about 34,000 workers (Gradul 1993: 73). The importance to the overall economy of the arms manufacturing sector also increased, with weapons exports estimated to have comprised 31 percent of industrial exports in 1975, up from 14 percent in 1967 and more recently 30 to 40 percent of Israel's industrial output. The arms industry employs "anywhere from 58,000 to as many as 120,000 Israeli. Israeli Aircraft Industries, the nation's largest employer, carries 20,000 on its payroll (Hunter 1987: 90). Women are part of this industry but they are mostly restricted to feminine type of jobs. It has been said so because the numbers of electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters only 12 women were self employed in this field in 1995 and 1,494 workers were working under them. When dealing with women technicians in Life and physical sciences only 243 women were self employed in this field and 8,950 workers were working under them. In the case of engineering and architecture 159 women workers were self employed and 1,576 were working under them. (See, Kraus 2003: 6).

In fact, on the whole, in the past two decades, Israeli industrial output has made international-level strides in the fields of medicine, electronics, agro-technology, telecommunications, fine chemicals, computer hardware and software as well as diamond cutting and polishing. In 2000s, the manufacturing industry employed 413,000 persons (among them, the rate of those with higher education was second only to that of the work forces of the USA and Holland) (www.newisraelfund.org.uk). However, women presence is negligible in these industries because very few women chose these courses due to certain fears: not to have finance to get this education, fear to enter in those fields where they are already in the minority, and absence of required day care centre, encouragement to opt science and technology as a subject in high schools. The situation of women's
participation in hi-tech field in 1997-2000, was 28,000 out of these students enrolled for the colleges of science and technology only 28 percent were girl students. There are certain fields in which women are still not enrolled such as Nuclear engineering, Air-conditioning engineering, and Technical engineering. There are those fields also where their presence is negligible such as Mechanical engineering (24), Agriculture engineering (2), Instrumental Control (2). This shows that all this becomes the negligible presence of women in hi-tech. The number of women who enrolled for software engineering in 1997-2000, was 2579 and in Industrial and Management engineering it was 1,288 and in Architecture it was 756 (Yaron 2000: 10). It shows that women are a part of different sectors of manufacturing industry. But they are a part of lower echelon of the industry. Only few women are self employed in diamond industry as well as in defence production. One cause of their negligible presence in the defence production field is that only few women are enrolled for the required qualification.

3. Jewish Women’s Participation in Trade, Business and Finance Sectors: In Israel, trade has grown more or less at general rate of economic growth. Despite the increase in buying power there hasn’t been an equivalent relative growth in trade. During the 1950s and 1960s women composed approximately 27 percent of the labour force. During the 1970s for which a more detailed breakdown is available, women composed of 25 percent of workforce in wholesale trade, 24 percent of the retail trade in food and 47 percent of the retail in textile and clothing.

The participation of women in the sphere of trade is the structure of the retail trade, where it is based on a high proportion of women in the sphere of hired sale workers-the proportion of women in the labour force is high. Where it is based on the labour of small entrepreneurs-the proportion of women is low. In the case of Israel retail trade is still based on small businesses, employing on average one or two workers per store with a relatively low percentage of wage workers, just under 20 percent retail trade in food and in clothing. In comparison, in the United States, by 1967, 85 percent of the labour force in the retail trade was a wage earner. The role of women in trade is primarily of hired sales workers (See, Izraeli 1993: 64). In 1990s the Jewish participation in the wholesale and retail trade was 12 percent for women and 14.6 percent for men (see,
CEDAW/C/ISR/1997/1-2: 267). During 1980s there was a revolution in Israeli business sector because Israeli government viewed entrepreneurship as an important vehicle of some half million immigrants from the former Soviet Union who arrived between 1988-93 and encouraged these developments by the creation of technological incubators, the small Business Authority and a network of centres for promoting entrepreneurship. Women were encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities and in a few cases training for women in this field was sponsored with public fund (Davidson 2004: 303).

The finance sector of Israeli economy has grown rapidly after the foundation of the state. As the below mentioned statement of Israeli Prime Minister Office in 1968 makes it clear.

"With the growth of the economy, the increased demand for bank credit spurred the development of the banking institutions and together with them the development of other financial institution such as insurance and pension funds and financial institutions for long range loans for specific purposes".

The rapid growth of the financial institutions and their assets entailed a rapid increase in the number of employees from 6,200 men and women in 1955 to 32,200 in 1977, a growth of 387 percent at a time. In 1954, women were 25.6 percent of the labour force in finances, in 1961, 35.9 percent, in 1972, 48.8 percent and in 1977, 53.7 percent (CBS Labour Force Survey, 1973). These large numbers of women entering the financial institutions were almost totally in clerical work. In 1972 male professional and managerial workers composed 11.6 percent of all those employed in financial institutions, while female professional and managerial workers composed only 1.5 percent. In 1977, the relation was 11.7 percent as compared to 1.3 percent. During last decade Jewish women ratio in this sector was 4.5 percent and for men it was 2.5 percent (Azmon & Izraeli 1993: 24). In 1990s number of those women who were working as independent Financial and Business sales workers was 262 while it was 964 for men. (See, Karus 89). In fact, Jewish women are participating in trade, business and finance since 1950 onward and state has adopted several measures to enhance women presence in the business sector in end of 20th century. Women are still segregated in clerical work in the finance.
4. Service Sector

The service sector remains the largest in terms of GDP and percentage of labor force of Israeli economy. In the late 1990s it contributed about 60 percent of GDP and employed 69 percent of Israel's workforce. Mainly because of the continuing task of absorbing immigration, public services such as education, health, and welfare remain the primary service industries. Business and financial services, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation, storage, and communication services are also important (See, Bersntein: 78).

A. Jewish Women's Presence in Education & Welfare: The rapid growth of state apparatus was one of the characteristic features of the economic growth in Israel. Women have got greater proportion in education and welfare services, which come under the state's umbrella. The other cause of women's high rate participation is that these services are considered as traditional. In 1978, the proportion of women in education and welfare that come under civil service was significantly higher than their proportion in the labour force in general-45 percent among civil servants as compared to 36 percent in the labour force.

These two sectors that come under the state apparatus have special importance due to number of reasons. First, the large share of these services in the state apparatus as well as their large share in labour force in general, makes them an important factor in the development and composition of labour force. Second, these are economic branches with a high proportion of women, a proportion which has significantly increased in Israel since the mid 1950s. As the number of Jewish women employed in the labour force has increased from 112,700 in 1954 to 389,600 in 1977, the number of women employed in the education services, the largest and most rapid growing of the three female spheres, has jumped from 12,900 women in 1956 to 83,000 in 1977, approximately 6.5 fold. Third, even if these spheres employed a large number of women these are not evenly distributed among the different ethnic groups. Fourth, the most important point is related to the ideological significance of these fields. They are considered typically, 'traditionally' female occupations, in terms of the extension of family roles. These
spheres are directly concerned with the socialization which is still considered an important duty of a woman as a mother and to take care of her elders are also related to women's fields (United Nations 1996: 186-87).

In Israel workers in the sphere of education compose a large share of the labour force-5.9 percent in 1931, 4.7 percent in 1948 and as much as 6.7 percent in 1961.

Table 2.7

Jewish Women Working as Kindergarten Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women’s Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>45.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>58.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>65.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>71.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The participation of women in this sector of economy was high due to the large number of school age children in the mass immigration of the 1950s, primarily among the Oriental immigrants because after its creation in 1948, Israel adopted Compulsory Education Law 1949, and made it obligatory that all children between 5 and 15 must study. However, education comes under state apparatus. It provides to those free of charge through the age of 17, and for 18 years old that have not completed their 10th grade. This factor also played a significant role in women’s higher rate of participation in this sector of economy.

This should be understood both in terms of an ideological commitment to education and learning and also in terms of the concrete problems of different cultures, speaking different languages, having different type of skills and different political experience. So it can be said that the desire for homogeneity along the European, ‘modern’ model, and
need for workers in an industrial economy, led to special emphasis being put on education system as an agent of socialization and training. In Israel the overall increase in the number of people employed in the education services and in their proportion of the labour force was accompanied by a process of feminization.

In the pre-state period, 38 percent of all teachers were women and 61.3 percent were men, though kindergarten teachers were almost totally women. In 1954 the percentage of women had risen to 45.5 percent and by 1961 there were already more women than men among the teachers. This proportion has continued to increase in the branch of education services, in general the proportion of women increased from 58.9 percent women in 1961, to 65 percent in 1972 and 71.3 percent in 1977 (See Bernstein, 1983). While during the end of 20th century it was 90.4 for Jewish women.5

In Israel, there are seven universities. When talking about the regular career-track faculty in these institutions of higher education in Israel women comprise a small minority in it earlier. However, the situation has a little bit improved in the last decade of 20th century as mentioned in table 2.7. Women are concentrated in the two lower ranks of the academic hierarchy, 75 percent of the female faculty was in the rank of lecturers and senior lecturers in 1983. The table shows that women number who are serving in the university sector is enhancing in Israel slowly. In 1988-89 the percentage of women professors in the universities was 4.7, while it was 8.8 in 1999. The percentage of women also enhanced at associate professor level as it was 8 percent in 1988-89 and in 1999, it was 19.9 percent. The percentage of senior lecturers in 1989-90, was 17.3 while in 1999 it was 32.2. The percentage of women lecturers was always high and in 1989-90 it was 29.9 percent which enhanced up to 39.5 percent in 1999.

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5 Beverly Mizrahi finds in her study "There are no statistics on the total number of kindergarten teachers? In fact this occupation was not included in the list of occupation in the 1995 census of the CBS. The Union of Local Authorities in Israel states that in 2000 there were 11,254 kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten assistants employed by these local authorities, but this number did not include those assistants who were employed in private kindergartens". Therefore, she assumes that the total number of assistants is actually higher than the number cited by the Union.
Table 2.8

Women Faculty at the University level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The participation of women in different scientific fields or disciplines, varies considerably. Jewish women in regular positions are mostly highly represented in the humanities, next in the social sciences, and least represented in the natural sciences (3 percent in the physical sciences and 14 percent in the life sciences).

In the professional schools (excluding medicine), women constitute 12 percent as in the total faculty, but are again differently represented in various schools; from one third in education to 3 percent in engineering. There is a small proportion of women in school of social work while many women are engaged in non-career tracks (as tutor) (See, Bernstein, 1993: 80-81). During last decade Jewish women participation in this branch was 21 percent and for men it was 5.4 percent.

The welfare services present a different pattern. These are much smaller services, though these appear to have grown rapidly. In Israel this service was not a different category. In 1972 CBS considered it as the part of ‘community services’ (Ibid).

Thus the welfare services that existed with the establishment of state were very small, predominately female and strongly affiliated with the women’s organizations. There are several women’s organizations in Israel namely the Association of Hebrew Women and later the Women’s International Zionist Organization established a wide range of welfare
activities, primarily dealing with women and children. After the foundation of Jewish state the main job of these Organizations was to work among the Orientals immigrants who were the main client of these services. Till 1960s welfare work was considered as semi- voluntary and semi-professional and that in 1970s, much emphasis was put on professionalism.

The welfare services are most feminized of the social services; these were composed of 70 percent women in 1972 and 75 percent in 1977. The gender difference was marginal in these services during the 1970s. Thus by 1977, 1.5 percent of the labour force in the welfare services were female academic workers. The percentage of non-academic professional workers was 30 percent as compared to 7.5 percent male workers and 5 percent of the labour force were managers -men and women equally. The number of men was greater at this level.

The ethnic composition of the welfare labour force is primarily Ashkenazi. But they started to make their entry in this field in 1972. In 1972 Orientals men and women equally accounted for 24.6 percent of all social services, while in 1977, they accounted for 32.6 percent. This increase was due primarily to the increased share of Oriental women in the welfare services. They were, however, unable to make their presence among the small section of academic and managerial women (Ibid).

B. Women in Health Services: When dealing with women presence in the health care services we find the number of women is enhancing day by day. In 1975 less than 30 percent women were studying medicine. In 1992-93, 46 percent of girls’ students enrolled for medical science and this number reached 50 percent in 2000. This level is higher than the level of female medical students in the USA. However, their number is not at par with their male counterparts. When talking about women employees in public medical services their number is 2,496 while the number of their male counterpart is 1,952 in 1995 (See, Karus ). The latest data of 1998 shows that number of male physicians in Israel was 17,899 (61.8 percent) while the number of female physician was 10,749 (37.1 percent). The one cause behind the increase of female doctors was that those women doctors who were part of the immigration from the former Soviet Union also got the licence for practice.
When dealing with the number of specialists we find it was 8,137 (71.2 percent) for men and for women it was 3,284 (28.7 percent). In the case of dentists the number of male doctors was 5,247 (63.4 percent) and 2,894 (34.4 percent) for women. The number of women doctors in Israel who are self employed is 350 while it is 613 for their male counterparts. Nonetheless gender difference persists in the choice of medical specialties, with women still concentrated in the lower paying and less “less prestigious”, medical specialties such as family practice, and psychiatrists. One result of this traditional division of labour is that many male doctors are found in in-patient setting, while female doctors are concentrated in out-patient clinics (Shuval 1992). In addition women still face obstacles to promotion within academic medicine where, despite, increasing numbers majority of doctors remain concentrated in lower level, clinical instruction positions rather than in senior research and teaching positions (Notzer & Broen 1995). A large number of women doctors are more or less equal to their male counterparts but not even one woman is the head of a public hospital till 2000. Only one woman heads a peripheral mental hospital at that time and a woman served as a deputy head an intermediate size of hospital, and four women were administrative directors of the hospitals. While in 2000, the ombudsperson in relation to the National Health Insurance was a woman filling an important statutory role on the topic of insured person right for state health insurance. This throws light on the vertical segregation of sex in medical occupation (See, CEDAW/C/ISR/2/3, 2001: 154-55). When dealing with ethnicity and class factor in all these sectors of Israeli labour market it is concluded by Bernstein in these words

“the “bottom” of the female labour market, service and production jobs, are typical of Oriental immigrant women; at the centre is clerical work, typical of second generation of Oriental women and at the top, is the semiprofessional and scientific work, typical of second generation Ashkenazi women and, to a lesser extent, first generation as well. Second the ability to break out of the confines of female labour market seemed to be conditioned primarily on educational achievement, and here the second generation of Ashkenazi women are away ahead. Young Oriental women

6 It was marked in Israeli women’ Network that in nursing profession women’s participation rate is always higher than their male counterparts in Israel as in most of the countries. In 2000, the total number of nursing workers were 28,224. Out of it 25,824 were women. These are a number of certified nurses in Israel while the number of practical nurses was 15, 399 for women (in Israel there are certified and practical nurses ). The number of male certified nurses was 2,400 and 1,574 practical nurses.
still have a long way to go if they are to move out of not only service work, but also the female labour market.”

C. Jewish Women in Defense Services The Israel Defense Force (IDF) is identified with the State, and as such it exerts exceeding influence. The importance of the military to genderization and to maintaining genderized power relations within and outside the army stems from its inevitable influence, from the symbolic importance attributed to military service by civilian society and from the fact that both men and women are recruited into the military. With the expansion of feminist values, increased awareness of gender equality in civilian life and the growing vulnerability of the army to public criticism, a more favourable climate has emerged for forums and women’s organizations to express their dissatisfaction with women’s status in the army.

Chen is the name of unit for women soldiers in Israel. The literal meaning of this word is charm. It is mandatory for Israeli citizen to serve in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) for three years according to 1953 Defense Law. It is due to the ultimate danger of war on the country due to unsolved status of Palestinian problem since last 5 decades. This law exempted Arab citizen of the land to serve in the IDF. For women the period of mandatory service is two years. The Law has also exempted from the mandatory duty on the basis of marriage, pregnancy and motherhood. In addition women could get a release on the grounds of religious conviction.

The recruitment rate of Jewish women in Defense in 1977 was 56 percent. In 1990, there was an increase of 10 percent in the participation rate. At that time the recruitment rate of women in IDF was 68 percent. The cause behind this enhancement rate was the lowering down of educational and socio-economic requirement for conscription that was adopted due to reports of Commission of Women in 1978. The ethnicity factor has great importance in Israeli social fabric and due to it the participation rate of Asian-Afro origin women was low. The change adopted by Israeli government in the policy due to Women’s Commission report some positive implication have been made for ethnic mobility which were previously rejected on the basis of their poor social “profile”.
During the past four decades or so military occupations became more segregated on gender lines. Of course women were part of IDF but most of them worked as clerks and other feminine jobs. After 1967 war some new units were established for defense of the territories that had been won by Israel. During the war there was shortage of human (males) resources. This situation leads to a more extensive use of women in jobs previously done by men in order “to free men for combat units”.

During the 1973 war the use of sophisticated technologies led the military to reevaluate its policies regarding the most efficient use of women. New technology’s use, furthermore, increased the need for “high quality” soldiers for which there was a shortage of men and for which more educated women soldiers were well suited. But the data related to women’s participation in several fields is unavailable.

*Zahal* is the central unit of Israeli Defense Force. The extent of sexual division of labour in the *Zahal* can be seen in army statistics on the distribution of Jewish women in various ranks and areas of service. Out of 850 military professions in Israel recognized by *Zahal* in 1980, women were engaged in only 270. Female officers make up 12 percent of officers in arm or tanks services According to Ann Bloom “the actual percentage of women soldiers who were engaged in clerical occupations was 65 percent while the other 35 percent were engaged in technical, mechanical and operational duties. A significant number of 35 percent who were not engaged in clerical work were engaged in welfare and teaching duties for soldiers from lower social strata who needed ‘cultivating’.

The position in the army is related to the position of soldier on front and rear (front means who is having fight with enemy, rear is related to backdoor services in the army). Even in the 1978, report on the ‘Status of Women’ in Israel which aspires to egalitarianism, the recommendation is to open all the roles with the exception of fighting roles at the front to women’s service. The shortage of human resources pressuring the Israeli army during last few years has opened to women more participation in combat role.
Women are conscripted into the army by mandate of the National Defense Service Law of 1986. Women are exempt from compulsory military service for several reasons: religious reasons; females who do not meet IDF threshold criteria; residence abroad; medical reasons; marriage. The percentage of exemption recipients is rising according to IDF Recruitment Administration data. Approximately 36 percent of female compulsory service candidates were exempted in 1996, rising to 37 percent in 1998 and to 38 percent in 2000. The number of women exempt for religious reasons is also growing. In 1996 their share stood at 23.8 percent compared to 27 percent in 2000. According to the State Comptroller, the Recruitment Administration does not act sufficiently to eradicate the phenomenon of false declarations of female conscript candidates.

With the adoption of the Amendment to the Defense Service Law in 1987, women received the opportunity to volunteer for combat positions; however the IDF never implemented this option. Until the late 1990's, no women were allowed in combat positions, except for an attempt in the 1950's to accept women to flight school. However, women did take over almost all field instructing positions in the IDF and, as such, were issued weapons, but they were not combatants but only just instructors. While nearly 90 percent of all combat jobs are still close to women (Shaomi 1992).

During 1990s women soldiers were allowed to be the part of combat unit due to which many are currently serving in the mixed Nahal Wild Cat companies responsible for the border with Jordan. But Female conscripts are unable to serve in combat positions in elite units such as the Galani Brigade, Paratroops or Armored crops. The ‘Alice Miller’5 High Court ruling required the IDF to integrate women into positions previously barred to them. The Amendment Number 11 to the Defense Service Law adopted by the Knesset in 2000 determines that the IDF must act to integrate women into all military professions. Since its application, combat servicewomen account for about 1 percent of compulsory service women. (www.isayeret.com). In fact, the IDF, is still propagating the gendered division of labour.

**D. Women in Management:** According to Israeli delegations’ report for Convention of Elimination Discriminations Against Women, the comprehensive data which documents
the existence of a glass-ceiling at all levels of Israeli labour market is difficult to gather, since it necessitates a complete breakdown and analysis of the job-structures within all economic branches, both in the public and private sector. The report is carrying data related to Jewish women under representation in managerial level. In Izraeli Dafna’s words “management is not just an occupation, but represents authority and command”. In 1995, in Israel 6.9 percent of all working men were managers, while only 2.2 percent of all working women were managers. Of the total managers, 19.5 percent were women (18,700 out of 96,000). This represents a certain increase when compared to 1990 data, when the rate of women in management positions was 18 percent of all managers (12,000 out of 66,000). This shows a steady increase of women participation at managerial level during the decade of 1980s. Notwithstanding the gradual increase of women representation in managerial roles, their rate is still very low when examined in the light of the increase in the general rate of women in the workforce. A survey conducted by the Union of Industrialists in 1990s, of 152 hi-tech corporations to examine the situation relating to women in managerial positions. The survey revealed that 14 percent of the total managers in these companies were women (totaling 900 women) while in 51 percent of these corporations there were no women managers at all. Israeli Civil Service is a public institution However, it should be noted that less than 4 percent (3.8 percent) of all working women directly belong to the Civil Service (32,131 out of 835,700 in 1995). The significant fact regarding gender stratification in the Civil Service is that while women made up close to 60 percent of all workers in the Civil Service in 1995, only 10.5 percent of the senior staff was women (Izraeli 2003).

5. Wage Structure in Israel

Israeli government has always been a prime actor in the state’s economy due to immigration and security problem. A former civil servant, commissioner, Arvham Friedmen, estimates that the government wage policy directly effected 4,30,000 of country’s workers in 1981; in other words, a third of the national employed people worked in jobs for which the government controlled either directly or indirectly, including the armed forces, teachers, employees of municipal authorities and the workers of government corporations. Hisdatrut is also a prime actor of state economy to decide its
wage policy with the help of government. It is estimated that the Private sector accounts for about 40 percent of economy in the country Histadrut 20 percent and the Government 40 percent (See, Arian: 39).

Participation of Jewish women in labour force is ever increasing as mentioned but if considered w.r.f wages of these workers there is remarkable differences in male and female workers’ wages. In term of wage equality, women do not fare well in the state of Israel since the beginning. A study in gender difference in wages undertaken in 1980 indicated that women in public sector earned 78 percent of their male counterparts. The study also shows that, if women were paid as the men for their human capital, their income would be more than men’s. In 1992, the gender gap had widened to 30-35 percent. More generally, Histadrut figures indicate that 65 percent of those who earn $500 (US) a month are women, while women comprise only 9 percent of those earning $2500 (US) a month. The cause for wage gap is that benefit added to salaries such as overtime, transportation cost etc is often granted to men and women unequally. Many women are paid below the minimum wage. The salary is so low that they are not subject to income tax. (www.nammat.org/magazine/myth.htm). If we discuss the impact of gender, ethnicity and nationality on Israeli labour market a study conducted pointed out that in these years earning gaps are enhanced in labour market that is because of good education and decreasing rate of labour union membership. Due to it the Ashkenazi men who are holding elite class status in Israel getting high salaries afterwards come the turn of Ashkenazi women who are getting better wages rather than Mizrahi women.(Cohen & Haberfeld 2003: 4).

Judithh Buber Agassi made a point in 1975, in study that Jewish women were segregated only for femining type of jobs and earning lesser than their male counterparts. At that time a Jewish woman’s hourly income was pound 3.90 while for man it was pound 4.92. It means that average pay of women at that time was 79.3 percent of men.

The CEDAW noted in 1997, that a marked disparity existed between the average earnings of women and men in many sectors and that women were also disproportionately represented in part-time employment. It was also concerned about the fact that many more women than men worked in the informal sector and performed unpaid work, thereby prospectively limiting their access to benefits associated with the formal sector.
Table 2.9

Average Gross Monthly Salary and Hourly Wages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Average gross monthly salary</th>
<th>Average gross hourly wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic professionals</td>
<td>7.907</td>
<td>13.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals and technical</td>
<td>5.702</td>
<td>9.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>11.019</td>
<td>16.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical workers</td>
<td>5.026</td>
<td>7.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents, sales, representatives and service workers</td>
<td>2.901</td>
<td>6.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled worker in agriculture</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry construction and other skilled workers</td>
<td>3.725</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>2.419</td>
<td>3.704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Elie Aloni, Chairman of Nammat during 1980s and member in the committee on “Status of Women” concluded it in these words; “The boss says that I will not give you a company car because you stay home in the evening with your children anyway. He gives the car to a male employee and that translate dollar in his pocket” (See, www.nammat.org).

The other cause of Jewish women’s low earning is pointed out by a social report prepared by the Adva Center in 1998 State policies that in the past sought to encourage women to work outside of the home are no longer in force. Day care centers, which enable mothers of small children to work full time, serve only about one-fifth of children aged 0-4. Kindergartens provide a framework for additional children, but they are half-day arrangements that do not facilitate full-time employment. Working mothers devote a large portion of their earnings to childcare (Swirski 1998: 4).

A. Causes of Jewish Women’s Less Earnings: There are various causes for Jewish women’s less earning in the labour market. Most of women are concentrating in three of the ten aggregated occupational categories: semi professional and technical workers, clerical workers and service workers. In other word every second woman is employed in
one of the following eight occupations: teachers and principals, social workers and
probation officers, nurses and paramedical workers, bookkeepers, secretaries, typist and
key punch operators, general office workers and sales workers. This trend is going on
since the establishment of Israeli economy.

Till mid-1980s Israeli state did not adopt the measure as adopted by U.S.A that were
instrumental in moving women into higher positions such as affirmative action legislation
and the decision of career oriented women to delay childbirth because Israeli society is
family oriented society. Social norms regarding women’s responsibilities for care of the
home and children, as well as many of the tasks which link family to the services in the
wider society, operating to encourage women to forgo potentially higher income jobs for
those with shorter and more convenient working hours and locations close to home (See,
Izraeli 1993).

6. Lack of Women Leadership in Trade Union Activism

The creation of new Israeli society in pre-state Israel was based on a socialist Zionist
rhetoric of equality that led many women to believe that Jewish national liberation would
include women’s liberation. Women are a part of labour organization (Histadrut), which
came into existence in 1920. There are approximately 40 national trade unions in Israel
(Histadrut). These unions are organized by industry for manual workers and by
occupation for professional workers. The Histadrut does not involve itself in trade
unionism. It also supplies social welfare and economic services, including education,
housing, culture, banking, Insurance and sport. In particular, its involvement in and
administration of the Sick Funds guarantees its membership, since access to health
service comes only by being a Histadrut member.

Jewish women were a part of labour force since the Yishuv period. Histadrut had a
distinguishing feature that not only the working women were having its membership but
the wives of married male workers. Due to increasing number of workers wives the
Organization of Working Mothers was created within the Histadrut. By the late 1930s,
the Organization had become a major organ of the Women Workers' Movement,
involving itself in volunteer social work among immigrants and placing considerable emphasis on the role of mothers in state building.

The role of the Histardut has been as much about nation building as about representing labour. In 1976, the Council of Women Workers and the Organization of Working Mothers merged and renamed Nammat. Today Nammat is described as “the women movement of the Histradut whose aim is the advancement of women in legislation, society and work”. Nammat is not considered core or a powerful section within the Histadrut.

The Department for salaried women is an organ that deals with the representation of the interest of working women. It was established in 1959. It is a small department that liaises with women elected to union secretariats and representative from large national workers’ committees. The other important work of this organ is to organize regular meetings and links with local women, and to organize unorganized women workers, improve working conditions and oversee implementation of relevant rules and laws passed by the Histadrut and Knesset respectively. Both of these bodies within the Histadrut are the focal points for most of initiatives undertaken to increase women’s representation and participation in party and union life. However, the Department’s resources are limited and the already marginal position of trade unionism within the Histadrut restricts its realm of influence. Indeed, neither the Department for salaried Women nor Nammat are considered core or powerful sections within the Histadrut.

Women have remained absent in the leadership of this Organization. Men have always occupied the top positions of Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. The highest committee is the Central Committee with 43 members, only 7 were women in 1988. In 1988, women made up 11.2 percent of the 196 member executive committee. The number of female heads of national trade union is very low. This latter figure is almost the same in these last two decades. The Pharmaceutical Union elected its first female chairperson in 1990 (Curtin1999). So it can be said that Jewish women presence is marginal at decision making level.
A. Women Representation in Trade Union at Local Level: At the local level, during the 1970s women were represented on only one-third of workers committee in workplaces where there was a large number of women. Since this time, women trade unionists have begun to explore several quota options. Prior to 1993, a workplace with more than 300 employees and with more than 25 percent of them women was required to elect at least one woman to the workers' committees even if she had received fewer votes than a male candidate. This measure was amended in 1993, requiring the election of at least one woman where women made up 10 percent of workers (Ibid).

7. Poor Enforcement of Legislations Related to Gender Equality in Economic Field

Laws are means of bringing change in a society, they are basic tools in the hands of a sovereign to implement those changes that are otherwise impossible to implement. But without proper machinery it is difficult to execute these laws because in reality social behaviour of society is related to its traditions. When talking about gender neutral law Israel was first in West-Asian region that adopted several laws which were based on Western model on political as well as economic level. In the case of Israel one has to keep this point in mind that there is no written constitution. To enhance SES of women it has adopted several laws at the economic front.

Israel has dearth of human- resources since the establishment of the state due to which it has always provided a set role to its women citizens to participate in Jewish economy. It is a state that has been facing a constant security threat due to that man has always extra responsibility to save their border because field of security is still the field of men even if Israeli state adopted a law that made compulsory for a woman to have 2 year military training.

Israel has adopted labour legislation, which has set out basic standards that apply to all workers and employers. As early as 1954 a workingwoman was given the right to three months paid maternity leave and another year's leave without pay.\(^8\) The *Equal Pay Act*

\(^8\) Even if paid maternity leave law exists in Israel, for which women cannot be fired from their work is very important, but there is nothing to prevent employers from firing the women as soon as they come back to work.
(1964) provided that women be paid a wage equal to that of their male counterparts when undertaking the same work. However, this law has not succeeded in achieving any significant reduction in the gender-wage differential. In 1980s, certain legal measures were adopted by Israeli state due to Israeli women's group which were concerned with issues related to equal opportunity. Even if Israel was the first nation in 1964 the state adopted the *Male and Females Workers (Equal pay)* Law (......1999: 121-22). In 1981 it made an amendment in the previous law and presented *The Equal Opportunity Act (1981)* criminally prohibited discrimination on account of sex, marital or parental status. In 1987, legislation passed stipulated the retirement age for men and women be the same and removed the prohibition on night work. As a result, the legal prohibition on women's night work was abolished and pension age for women (previously 60 years) was made equal to that of men (65). In both the cases, women retained the legal prerogative to refuse to work in the night shift and to retire at 60 –indicating the ambivalence about foregoing. In the same year *The Minimum Wage Law -1987* sets a minimum wage for the employment of workers in proportion to their scope of employment. The *Minimum Wage Law* is enforced through self-initiated employee complaints, and through processes that are initiated by the Department of Labor Law Enforcement. If an employer who is found in violation of the law is sent a warning which insures payment of back salary. An employer who refuses to pay back salary is prosecuted or fined 2500 NIS (approximately $760) per employee per month. But the practice of this law in Israel is un-couth and it is pointed out in the1997 report prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women in Israel that the Israeli labour market indicates that adherence to the Minimum Wage Law is low, as is the level of enforcement (See, CEDAW/C2/ISR, 1997:267-68).

Israeli state provided special rights to pregnant women workers, as well as those who had just given birth, with various legislated Law-1954. A pregnant employee must notify her employer of her condition by the fifth month of her pregnancy. From then on, she may not be employed for overtime or more than six days a week, and may not be required to rights and protections, most of which are dealt with in the Employment of Women. According to a recent amendment in the Law an employer may not use pregnancy as the ground for termination of a woman employee. The ground reality of this law is brought in
light by Israeli Women Network but in 2000s, a woman with a university degree, who speaks Japanese and who worked as the sales and marketing director for Asian customers for a diamond distributor in Ramat Gan was told, before she was fired: "Your pregnancy is a problem, we need to think about how to handle this situation. It is not respectable, it is not aesthetic. How can you meet with customers with a belly? (www.iwn.org). This case study proves that the most significant problem in Israel concerns enforcement of the positive legislation.

Maternal leave rights for childcare became paternal rights, but the change did not apply to collective labour agreement, which provide mothers, but not fathers of young children, the right to work fewer hours. Two equal opportunity laws came into effect in 1981 and 1988, the second more encompassing than the first, but both with ineffective enforcement mechanisms. Because of these laws in most major departments of the public sector, including the civil services, government owned enterprises, the Jewish Agency and all the universities, a woman has been appointed to be “in charge of status of women” a position lacking in authority and resources. Frequently the position is offered by a male superior to a woman without considerations of her attitudes toward feminism or her qualifications for the assignment, which is an addition to her regular job without additional compensation. (See, Swirski 1998). During 1990s, the attention of women unionist had become focused on extending wages within this legislation to include fringe benefits.

To make amendment in the legislation in 1994, Nammat, the Department for salaried women and the Israel Women’s Network viewed lobbying the government as an important strategy in the fight to acquire amendments to the Equal Pay Act (1964). The lobbying process was undertaken both independently and through Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women. Women unionists held meetings with the Ministry of Labour (in 1994 this post held by a woman) and Minister of Finance but, as at the end of 1994, petitions regarding the fringe benefits amendments had failed. While women unionist noted that “it only required adding one sentence so it reads equal pay for equal pay and fringe benefits”, the Minister of Finance claimed that such an amendment would be too expensive”. This shows the disenchantment of Israeli government towards gender equality.
Women Unionists admit that Israeli Government has adopted several progressive laws to improve the economic status of women. According to these unionists these laws become impotent because of the ineffective enforcement mechanism. *The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1988)* was adopted by the government but it did not establish agencies to implement the principal of equality. In accordance with Article 18 of the *Equal Opportunity in Employment Law*, the Minister of Labour and Welfare appointed monitors to oversee implementation of the provisions of this law. Each monitor is responsible for enforcing implementation of the Equal Opportunity in Employment Law in her district, but they bear a heavy burden: In addition to their monitoring of the Equal Opportunity Law, these same women supervise the day-care centres in their districts. Thus very little of their time is dedicated to overseeing the law. One large obstacle to the enforcement of laws and recommendations for advancing women in Israel is the absence or inadequacy of budgets. According to the Equal Opportunity in Employment Law, the Minister of Labour and Welfare is authorised to establish a public council for enforcing the law. Although this council was theoretically established, it has hardly met and nothing has been done to enforce the law.

It is rare for a woman to sue her employer based on the Equal Opportunity in Employment Law, and even more rare for a meaningful decision to be rendered. Because of the small number of petitions, the courts in Israel have not yet grappled with the difficult questions of discrimination in promotion, hiring, wages, or of sexual harassment at work. Until recently, the Israeli courts awarded no more than $1,000 in damages to a woman who sued her employer. The sum was awarded for mental anguish and not compensation for the loss of income or the monetary damage. The ground stewardesses of El Al Airlines sued their company for not allowing them to participate in a course for station managers abroad, a course that is a prerequisite for promotion to more senior positions in El Al. Only after twenty years of discrimination, six years in court, and three complaints filed against the company, the group settled for compensation in the amount of $300,000 (See, iwraw.igc.org/publications/countries/israel.htm).

On the other hand there are laws that have been amended to include new developments related to reproductive rights, such as fertility treatments and paternity leave. Today,
Israel has relatively progressive legislation in place in order to provide people with equal employment opportunities when they exercise their reproductive and parenting rights. One problem with these labor laws is that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is allowed to give employers permission to dismiss employees who are pregnant, during or after maternity leave, or during fertility treatments -- as an exception to the law's prohibition against firing women during these times. This case study that brought to light by Israel's Women Network (an Israeli Women Non-governmental Organisation) shows how all progressive laws become irrelevant.

Nearly 50 years ago, Israel enacted laws to protect women from being discriminated against in the workplace on the basis of pregnancy and motherhood. Since its founding in 1984, the Israel Women's Network has been at the forefront of the fight to protect women's rights to remain employed without discrimination during certain uniquely female life experiences -- such as fertility treatments; pregnancy; giving birth, recovering from a birth and caring for a newborn. IWN also advocated for the rights of men to take paternity leave after the birth of a child. Over time, the laws have been amended to include new developments related to reproductive rights, such as fertility treatments and paternity leave.

In some cases, employees are not aware of their legal rights and so they cannot act to protect these rights. In other cases, employees are left with no means to protect their rights other than to file a civil lawsuit in the labor courts to seek monetary damages or reinstatement to their position -- but many people cannot afford the legal expenses and are concerned about their future professional reputation. IWN believes that the government devotes insufficient resources towards enforcement of the laws protecting women from employment discrimination on the basis of gender and parenthood (See, www.iwn.org.il).

This problem is severe because the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is allowed to give employers permission to dismiss employees who are pregnant, during or after maternity leave, or during fertility treatments -- as an exception to the law's prohibition against firing women during these times. IWN believes that the Ministry's current
procedures and standards are wholly inadequate to prevent many violations of the law. And may be that is the prime cause that Dr. Halperin-Kaddari who is a well-known women activist as well as educationist claimed "In order for women to achieve genuine equality in the workplace and at home, the law must not only be reformed but must also be enforced".

A. Jewish women and Poverty: According to certain academics, and popular understanding of poverty have seen it as a particular level of income. Earlier it had been most widely understood, not as any particular level of income but as a relationship of social class. (Jones & Novak, 2001: 17). In Israel when we are dealing with poverty we will discuss only women case.

In 1990s, Talia Livni's, (the president of NA'AMAT Israel), message was sobering, yet inspirational. She provided details of the dire economic situation that Israeli women face, and delineated the many services and facilities NA'AMAT has increased and adapted to meet their needs. Delegates were concerned at Livni's report that 1,300,000 Israelis live below the poverty level, with single mothers most affected.\(^9\) She told us that 48.5 percent of the labor force is women; they earn an average of 30 percent less than men in the same position, and there has been an increase of 240 percent in women's unemployment in the past two years. The situation for working women is not good.

"NA'AMAT is working to deal with this situation," Talia Livni stated. "Lawyers in NA'AMAT are preparing a legislative plan to encourage the employment of women. The plan asks the government to provide tax incentives and special grants to employers who provide jobs for women." Livni outlined the goals of the plan.

We are seeking more representation of women in higher levels of management and implementing plans to close the gap in salaries. Employers are encouraged to create a suitable environment, flexible hours, and to establish subsidized day care centers. The

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\(^9\) A cause of women poverty is the fact that the state does little to enforce the payment to women of alimony and child support that have been agreed by the courts, in the case of divorce. Women almost always get to keep the children but often they are left with inadequate payments to take care of those children.
government needs to recognize day care expenses as tax deductible. "If these goals are implemented, it will create a major change in the status of women," she concluded.10

The delegates were impressed with Livni's report of the vast scope of NA'AMAT services throughout Israel. There are almost 300 day care centers serving 20,000 children. There are fourteen multi-purpose centres that are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Social workers and councillors serve and educate both children and parents. The NA'AMAT Legal Department serves 10,000 women each year. Women's Centers will be opened in Beersheba and Carmiel to serve people in the Negev and the Galilee (www.nammat.org/magazine/myth.htm).

Conclusion

Israel has adopted various measures to enhance the economic status of Jewish women after its establishment. Education is a key factor in any real and stable social change. In Israel the government adopted legislative measures to eradicate illiteracy in the country. Jewish women's participation in universities is better than their male counterparts yet like in most countries of world they are picking out humanities and social science. Due to that, when talking about their participation in different sectors of economy it is found that they are segregated in some feminine fields such as education, welfare and social services. There presence is very limited in the agriculture. In manufacturing industry, most of them are still segregated in the clerical work. The same is true about trade, business and finance. In fact women are part of almost all sectors in the economy but their presence in high position and significant level is still very low. Here also the glass-ceiling factor exists and the proportion of women at decision-making level is very low.

When dealing with Jewish women's share in Israeli Defence Force, there also they are deprived of the positions such as General, Colonel etc. There are certain legislations adopted by the Israeli government to enhance the economic status of Jewish women and it has been successful to some extent in that the Jewish women's participation in labour market has been increasing day by day. However, legislations have failed to curb the

10 Haya Stayer stated "women are indeed poorer than men". The extent of poverty in Israel is among the highest in the Western world". To her during the end of 29th century in Israel 25 percent of single mothers are poorer than the 14 percent of married couple who lives below the poverty line.
glass-ceiling factor and that they are getting less payment for their hard work and may be that is the cause the number of women who are living below poverty line is greater than their male counterparts in Israel like most of other societies. On the other hand it is also true that ethnicity makes impact on women’s participation in the labour force. Mizrahi women are segregated in the clerical and production work. In fact, Mizrahi are facing double discrimination in the labour market because they have not only to compete with their male counterparts but also with their sisters of Ashkenazi origin. This chapter is based on the hypotheses that Jewish women are part of labor force since the beginning. Women are still getting less economic reward from their male counterparts. The above mentioned data have proved the hypotheses.